

Holt Community Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 120821 |
| Local Authority | Norfolk |
| Inspection number | 313751 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 May 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Glynn Storer |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 171 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Anita Jones |
| Headteacher | Mrs Beryl Knowles |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 November 2003 |
| School address | Norwich Road Holt Norfolk NR25 6SG |
| Telephone number | 01263 713107 |
| Fax number | 01263 711039 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller-than-average sized school serves the town of Holt, although more than a quarter of its pupils come from outlying communities. Pupils' social and economic circumstances vary, but the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is currently above that in schools nationally. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and, of the few with minority ethnic heritages, only one is at an early stage of learning to speak English. Children's attainments on entry are below those normally expected at this age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is high for a school of this size. The school holds the Activemark and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holt Community Primary is a good school. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, the school has moved forward since its last inspection. Provision is better than it was and continues to improve. As a result, standards are rising and the school is well placed to make further improvements. The school has the support and confidence of the majority of parents. One parents summed up the views of many when commenting: 'My children have all thoroughly enjoyed school. It has been a pleasure to be part of Holt school and I have no complaints...'

Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well over time. By the time that they leave the school, almost all attain or exceed the expected standard for their age and overall standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Standards also exceed national expectations in information and communication technology (ICT) and in art. Standards are rising because staff have improved their use of assessment information to identify and support any pupils who are falling behind. This has been a key factor in establishing good progress in Years 3 to 6, where until recently, progress in some classes has been slower than it should be.

Effective teaching and a good, stimulating curriculum also have a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many exciting activities that the teachers provide. It is no surprise that standards in art and ICT are high, because these are amongst their favourites. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response and they manage lessons well. Provision for pupils with different needs and abilities is good. Teachers and teaching assistants give effective support and challenge that ensures that all pupils, including the very able and those who find learning difficult, do equally well.

This inclusive provision reflects the school's caring ethos. The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. There are strengths in personal support and guidance, especially for vulnerable pupils and families, and arrangements for keeping pupils safe and secure meet current government requirements. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils know how to live safely and healthily. They make a positive contribution to school and the wider community and their secure basic skills and positive attitudes prepare them well for their future lives. Academic guidance is satisfactory, but the school has yet to embed the use of personal targets and to ensure that teachers' marking is consistent in showing pupils how to improve their work. This prevents pupils from taking responsibility for their own learning and progress.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have introduced rigorous procedures for evaluating the work of the school that result in clear direction and challenging targets for improvement. The school is beginning to develop the roles of other staff with leadership responsibilities, but as yet, they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring their subject areas or in planning for school improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision for the Foundation Stage is good and because of this, children make good progress. Many children enter the school with below average attainment. They need support to help them develop the confidence to communicate with others and express their

feelings. The school does this well. Adults treat children with kindness and respect and create an environment where children are not afraid to experiment and learn new skills. Activities are well structured and teachers make use of a variety of resources to interest and engage the children. Good use of assessment information ensures that children progress in all areas of learning. This includes the use of a 'Learning Journey Book', which holds snapshots of each child's development throughout the year and is shared with children and their parents. Parents treasure these books as a record of their child's early development. The effectiveness of this provision ensures that by the end of the Foundation Stage all children have made good progress, with most fully meeting and some exceeding nationally expected standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the guidance that pupils receive about their work by introducing personal targets and ensuring that teachers' marking shows them clearly how to attain them.
- Give subject leaders a more prominent role in checking on standards and quality and in planning for school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From starting points that, for many, are lower than normal, pupils make good progress through the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. In the 2007 national tests for 11-year-olds, standards in mathematics and science were also above average. However, pupils overall achievement that year was no better than satisfactory, because there was significant underachievement in English, particularly on the part of girls and higher attaining pupils. The school has acted promptly to remedy this weakness. Senior staff have used data from the recently introduced pupils' tracking system to remedy historic patterns of underachievement in lower Key Stage 2. Because staff identify any pupil at risk of underachievement, accurately diagnose and put in measures to support specific areas of weakness, pupils' rate of progress in Years 3 and 4 has increased considerably. Along with consistently good progress in Years 5 and 6, this means that pupils' progress is accelerating and that achievement over time is good. Standards are above average overall and standards in English are set to rise from the below average levels of 2007. Pupils also achieve well in art and ICT and attain standards above national expectations for their age. Boys and girls of all abilities, including those who find learning difficult, do equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils, teachers and other adults respect each other and work well together. This helps pupils to develop confidence and achieve well. By the time they leave the school, they have developed the skills to support their future economic well-being. Pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning in an environment that promotes positive attitudes and good behaviour. Adults have high expectations that reflect in pupils' caring attitudes to each other in lessons and around school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures is particularly strong. Parents appreciate the emphasis the school places on developing caring, responsible young people of the future. 'My daughter was especially shy but she has developed into a confident young lady', said one. Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection, because the headteacher works well with other agencies and parents to promote regular attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Much teaching is lively and engaging. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations. They establish good working habits as the norm and set work, such as the 'Monster's Banquet' project, that is both demanding and enjoyable. Whether giving one to one support or group support to pupils of all abilities, including the most able, teaching assistants and additional teachers make a good contribution to pupils' learning. There are examples of highly effective marking that shows pupils clearly how to improve their work, but this practice is not consistent in all classes. In a minority of lessons when teaching is less effective, the pace of learning varies, because teachers do not make the best use of the time available. When pupils do not have enough time to reinforce their learning through completing independent work, they do not make the best possible progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and academic achievement. Pupils talk excitedly about how much they enjoy the range of activities available to them, such as art, and how they wish they could have more time to do their favourite ones. They particularly enjoy ICT, which is exceptionally well integrated into the curriculum and has a demonstrable impact on progress in literacy and numeracy. This enjoyment also comes from the introduction of a themed approach to organising the curriculum. This is already in place in Key Stage 1 but is at an early stage of development in Key Stage 2. Pupils respond well when topics engage their interest and they can see the relevance of their learning. To promote this, teachers make good use of a wide range of visits, which make full use of the local environment. Activities such as after school clubs, sporting activities, visits to concerts and the opera, and fundraising all contribute to the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The curriculum gives pupils a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and how to make a contribution to their community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good procedures to ensure that all groups of pupils are cared for and supported, and the headteacher takes a lead role in this. Personal care and guidance are effective because staff have a strong commitment to supporting pupils so that they can develop into confident learners and achieve well. This supportive environment contributes well to the good standards pupils achieve. Arrangements for keeping pupils safe and secure fully meet the statutory requirements. Pupils know the importance of healthy lifestyles and staying safe. They can talk about what they need to do to improve their work. However, the school has only recently begun to formalise the setting of personal targets and marking does not consistently show pupils how to improve. The school provides good support and advice for pupils moving to the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an effective leader. Her vision for the school has resulted in a strong team spirit amongst the staff and has added considerably to the quality of teaching and learning. She motivates staff by giving them a real part to play in improving the school. Consequently, senior leaders give strong support. Together, they have brought rigour and accuracy to school self-evaluation and the direction that they provide gives the school a good capacity to improve further. The school has begun to promote the leadership potential of other staff by developing their subject leadership responsibilities. However, many need further experience of all stages of planning for improvement and monitoring before their work can impact fully on standards and quality. Governors support the school effectively. They also gather a wealth of first-hand information in order to hold the school to account for what it achieves.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holt Community Primary School, Holt, NR25 6SG

Thank you for making us so welcome when I visited your school. We really enjoyed watching you at work and at play and talking to you about all of the good things that you do there. I particularly enjoyed seeing the slide presentations made by pupils in Year 5. I thought that you used ICT well and that your work was very good

This is what we found out about your school.

- Children in Foundation Stage get a good start to their time in school.
- Almost all of you behave well, work hard in your lessons and make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- All of the adults in school help you to learn and take really good care of you.
- You thoroughly enjoy all of the activities that there are for you, but especially ICT and art, where many of you do very well.
- Most of you are growing up to be active and healthy and your school provides lots of activities to help you to do this.
- Mrs Knowles, the staff and governors have worked hard to make the school a better place for you to learn and grow.

In order to help, we have asked Mrs Knowles and the other adults to do two things.

- We have asked them to make sure that you all have personal targets and that, when they mark your work, teachers show you exactly how to reach them.
- We have also asked Mrs Knowles to let teachers who lead the different subjects check more regularly on how well you and everybody else in school are doing, so that they can help the school to improve even more.

You can all help by taking notice of the advice that teachers give you and by doing your best to carry it out.

We hope that you all continue to work hard and do well at Holt Community Primary School.

Glynn Storer Lead inspector